

26/06/1997

MSC a real-life test bed, says Dr M

Kamarul Yunus in Budapest

BUDAPEST, Wed: Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) does not only serve as an experimental base for multimedia companies but will also see tests being conducted in a real-life society and electronic government.

"In this corridor, participating companies can test their respective systems with a real government... not stage a play... in the administrative city of Putrajaya," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Hungarian businessmen at a seminar here.

In explaining to the participants that the electronic government is one of the seven flagship applications to be implemented in the MSC, Dr Mahathir said the latest in electronics and information technology (IT) will be integrated into the processes of government.

"We will make available all the facilities for companies wishing to try out their systems of electronic government," he added.

Dr Mahathir stressed that the Government is not out to make money from the companies participating in the MSC. Rather it is more interested in creating a a great test bed for all kinds of new ideas in telecommunications and multimedia development.

"We want to find out how the ideas work in real life," he said, adding that the Government is introducing the electronic government because the amount of work has increased and will increase further.

Dr Mahathir is here for a two-day working visit. Topping the agenda - which includes enhancing relations in trade, science and technology, and tourism - is the promotion of the MSC.

The 15km by 50km MSC, stretching from the Petronas Twin Towers to the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, is aimed at turning Malaysia into a global IT hub. Within the corridor, two cyber cities will be built: Putrajaya, the administrative city, and Cyberjaya, which will accommodate companies participating in the MSC.

Dr Mahathir said with the dawning of the Information Age, the country needs a test bed to determine the effects of IT on society and to benefit fully from the latest technologies.

"We need to know how to benefit from the Information Age... what we must guard against... without tests we may do the wrong things.

"I think the people in Hungary know very well the need to have a test bed as they have experienced the situation (of being under communism for about 70 years).

"It has been a very costly experiment for the Hungarians," he said.

In the case of the MSC, Dr Mahathir said, the Government wants to put in place a test bed that continues to be relevant for a long time in view of the fast changing needs, technological advances, and widespread effects on society.

Dr Mahathir also visited the Ikarus vehicle manufacturing plant in Szekesfehervar and the Videoton computer industries centre. Ikarus produces buses while Videoton is an electronics industrial area.

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